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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2009

Media Highlights: Clinton's Global Partnerships; Commentary on Turkey-US-Iraq Relations; New Case Against Incirlik Base Extensions; Sabah on USNATO Tour to Afghanistan; Another 'One Minute' Crisis in Rize; Erdogan Makes TGS Demands; Erdogan on Turkey's Foreign Policy; Erdogan Rejects Swine Flu; New Turkish University for Kabul;

Clinton's Global Partnerships to Strengthen Muslim Ties
Turkish media outlets were lukewarm in initial reporting on Secretary Clinton's new initiative to boost development around the Muslim world. National broadcaster TRT-TV Online in "Obama's New Beginning Plan," notes that "previously, in his June address in Cairo, President Obama promised to seek a new start to troubled US relations with the Islamic world." In "Hillary Clinton Offers US Aid to Help Boost Muslim Ties," Islamic-oriented Today's Zaman notes that "taken together the new package pales in comparison to the billions of dollars in aid that Washington extends to governments in the region, including both Israel and Egypt." In "New US Initiative for the Islamic World," liberal Radikal says, "Secretary Clinton, speaking at a development forum in Marrakesh, announced the new US initiative with the world's Muslims, to promote entrepreneurship, economic development and education." Mainstream Aksam's online page headlines, "Clinton Holds Muslim Initiative in Morocco," and notes, "Clinton said the programs would aim to encourage scientific and technical collaboration, women's empowerment and cooperation between faiths."

Pundits Take Note of Turkey-US and Turkey-Iraq Relations
Cuneyt Ulsever in mainstream Hurriyet evaluates Turkey's foreign policy and says "I am sure Turkey will produce independent policies in certain areas, but after Obama was elected as the President and Davutoglu assigned as Turkish Foreign Minister, Turkey-US ties started settling on a new axis. Within the framework of Obama's multi-centered politics - which expects active participation from the other countries - Turkey is playing for the role of the US Representative in the Middle East. US wants to test Turkey in four areas. First of all the US wants to know whether Turkey will take over an active role in Northern Iraq or not. Secondly, will Turkey be able to tame Iran under US' demands. The US also wants to know whether Turkey will be able to take Syria to the US' side. And finally, the US wants to test Turkey whether it will be able to save

Hamas and Hezbollah from Iran's influence. If Turkey passes all these tests without losing or isolating Israel in the Middle East completely, then Turkey will be considered successful, otherwise, we'll go back to Bush Administration's period."

Sami Kohen in mainstream Milliyet compares current ties between Ankara-Irbil, as compared to last year, and says because of Ankara's rationalist and pragmatic strategies, Turkey has improved relations with the Northern Iraqi Administration. He comments: "The Kurdish Administration in Northern Iraq, with US pressure, supported Turkey in its fight against PKK terrorism. And we came to today's point through a series of diplomatic and political initiatives, supported by the military. Good ties with Northern Iraq is necessary for Turkey, especially after the US withdrawal from Iraq."

Turkish NGO Goes to Court Against the Use of Incirlik Airbase by the US

Papers report that following an application by the Global Peace and Justice Coalition, a Turkish NGO, the Council of State (Danistay) prosecutor has demanded the annulment of a Council of Ministers decision made in 2007 to extend the agreement with the US allowing the use of Incirlik Airbase for another two years. The prosecutor said the approval of the parliament was needed to extend the mandate for using Incirlik AB. He noted that the parliament, and not the Council of Ministers, was to decide whether to authorize a foreign troop deployment in Turkey and to use Turkish facilities. Danistay is expected to make a decision on the issue within a month, according to papers.

Sabah Multipart Series on Afghanistan

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Mainstream-pro government Sabah's diplomatic correspondent Duygu Guvenc went on a USNATO tour in October in Afghanistan, reporting on the Turkish ISAF contributions and the challenges of civilian infrastructure projects in a three part series. She led off the series with a frank assessment of Turkey's "tough mission" in Afghanistan and how Turkey handles many projects there, including the police force, education and health services. In addition to ISAF cooperation, she also emphasizes that the future of Afghanistan is in civilian hands, noting the need for teachers, engineers and doctors. One part of the series takes a humorous look at life for the ISAF forces there, from rock concerts to the delights of Afghani bread. "Now, ISAF is looking for a way out from Afghanistan," she observes and notes that "civilians hold the key for the troop exit from Afghanistan."

Turkey-Israel: A Mini 'One Minute' Crisis in Rize and Calls for Gul to Visit Israel

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Aksam, Haberturk, Cumhuriyet, Yeni Safak and Zaman report the mayor of the Black Sea province of Rize, Halil Bakirci, had an "unpleasant" exchange of remarks during a meeting with visiting Israeli Ambassador, Gaby Levy. Mayor Bakirci told the Israeli Ambassador that the attitude of Turkish people toward Israel would not change as long as Israel continues its "expansionist policies." "The people of Rize will defend themselves in the face of such threats, but they will not kill babies," said Bakirci. Levy responded by saying that Israelis did not have any other alternatives for survival. He admitted that Turkish-Israeli relations had entered a difficult period, but added that Turkey-Israel bilateral relations had strong roots. According to Turkish media, the mayor went on to express anxiety about the safety of the Israeli tourists visiting the Black Sea region, who he said were viewed with suspicion but constitute 70 percent of all foreign visitors to the area.

Commentary Condemns: In mainstream Hurriyet, Chief Editor Ertugrul Ozkok took aim at the Mayor, criticizing him for his warning that "Israeli tourists should not come to Rize" and for voicing concerns of Israel policies in Gaza. According to Ozkok, "if Ankara's harsh language spreads internally and turns into warnings to an Ambassador from a Mayor, then, it will be difficult for the Turkish foreign policy to stretch when it is necessary."

Gul Should Visit Israel: In mainstream Aksam, columnist Utku Cakirozer voices concern that the continuing diplomatic crisis will

damage Turkey and Israel's strategic interests. "The heaviest portion of the bill will go to Israel, because Turkey is Israel's only trustworthy ally in the Islamic world," he opines. "Foreign Ministry officials in both countries and the Ambassadors in two capitals, exert extreme efforts to ease the tensions, however, the remarks of the politicians in both countries, do not help at all. We believe that, at this point, President Gul can play the most constructive role to eliminate the tensions. If President Gul pays a visit to Israel, the relationship between Ankara-Tel-Aviv will reach the much deserved strategic level again."

Erdogan Calls on TGS to Turn In Anti-Government Conspirators
Papers report Prime Minister Erdogan, on an alleged military plot against his government, called on the TGS Chief General Ilker Basbug to bring to justice the suspects who drafted the plan for fighting fundamentalism. Erdogan wanted the army to hand over Colonel Dursun Cicek, the author of the plan, and five other military officers to the prosecutor. TV and print media also carry reports of a new wrinkle in the Ergenekon crisis with the publication of a new "military memorandum" on fundamentalism. Media report that last night an unidentified officer e-mailed a copy of another secret TGS memo dated April 2009, to the 'Ergenekon' prosecutor and media outlets. The new memo indicates that 430 websites, including the NYT, the New York Post, The Independent, ANF, DIHA, Bianet, the AFP and the WP, were monitored. Wire services reported that 292 of them were in Turkish and 138 in foreign languages. They were categorized as "separatist," "fundamentalist," "nationalist," "extreme left,"

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"pro-EU" and "unbiased." The memo was signed by eight officers, including Colonel Cicek. It was presented to then TGS Deputy Chief, General Hasan Igsiz. The memo also listed the websites used by the TGS for psychological warfare, say papers.

Erdogan: Turkey in Close Ties both with West and Islamic World
All papers report Prime Minister Erdogan on Tuesday told his ruling AK Party group meeting that Turkey was "not shifting" its foreign policy, but was only getting "normalized." Erdogan emphasized Turkey was in close relationship both with the West and the Islamic world. "Defending the rights and humanity in the face of the Israeli atrocities in Gaza cannot be characterized as shifting politics," said Erdogan.

Erdogan-Akdag Disagreement on Swine Flu Vaccines Lead to Confusion
All papers report Erdogan's controversial rejection of the swine flu vaccination, just as swine flu vaccinations began in Turkey and the death toll hit eleven. Health Minister Recep Akdag was vaccinated in front of TV cameras as part of the nationwide swine flu vaccination campaign. Prime Minister Erdogan, however, said he will not get vaccinated, adding he did not agree with the health minister that it should be compulsory. Akdag said the prime minister was not in the group at risk for contracting the virus, and that citizens would make their own choice about the vaccination. Erdogan's remarks also led to confusion over the effectiveness of the vaccine, say papers. Eyup Can in Hurriyet writes that the PM has more concerns regarding the vaccination campaign which the public doesn't know. "Otherwise," he says, "the PM would not be concerned that if anything goes wrong with the campaign, his government would get all the blame."

Turkey to Establish University in Kabul (Zaman)
Islamist-oriented Zaman reports Turkey would establish Mevlana University in Kabul, upon demands coming from President Karzai that Afghanistan's education needs be met. In the first phase, an Education Faculty will be set up. Afghanistan will need 100,000 more teachers by the beginning of 2010, says Zaman. There is currently eight Turkish schools in Afghanistan, including two high schools for girls.

Upcoming events:

Q November 4: President Abdullah Gul will hold meetings with Prime Minister Erdogan and army chief General Ilker Basbug.
Q November 4: British Foreign Secretary David Miliband will meet in Ankara with the chief EU negotiator Egemen Bagis.
Q November 5-9: The 25th session of the Standing Committee for

Economic and Commercial Cooperation of OIC (COMCEC) will be held in Istanbul.

Q November 8: Iranian President Ahmadinejad will come to Istanbul for the OIC meeting.

Q November 6: Foreign Minister Davutoglu will go to Paris for an official visit.

Q November 10: The AKP government plans to bring the "democratic initiative" to the parliament for debates.

TV News (NTV)

Domestic

Q The government plans to debate the government's Kurdish "democratic initiative" in the parliament on November 10, but opposition CHP says the debates should not be held on the day when Turkey commemorates the death of the founder of modern Turkey, Ataturk.

Q DTP leader Ahmet Turk says his party will file a legal complaint against an alleged military plot envisaging steps against the Kurds.

Q Farming Minister Mehdi Eker has briefed the parliament on a new regulation related to genetically modified food.

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World

Q Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei says his country will not be deceived into reconciliation with its arch foe, the United States.

Q France and Germany urge Iran to accept a UN-brokered proposal to enrich its nuclear fuel abroad rather than lose time by asking for a further round of talks.

Q Four months after unrest in China's Xinjiang region, security officials have launched a fresh campaign to track down accused rioters.

Q The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has ruled against the use of crucifixes in classrooms in Italy, saying he practice ran counter to the child's right to freedom of religion.

JEFFREY